

BRIEF REMARKS

ON A NUMBER OF

False Propositions,

3444 AND

Dangerous Errors,

Which are spreading in the Country ;

Collected out of sundry Discourses lately published, wrote by Dr. WHITAKER and Mr. HOPKINS.

Written by Way of DIALOGUE,

By WILLIAM HART, A. M. K
Pastor of the First Church in SAY-BROOK.

" GREAT Men are not always wise. ELIHU.
" THE Lord said unto Eliphaz, My Wrath is kindled against
" thee, and against thy two Friends ; for ye have not spoken
" of me the Thing that is right.
" Therefore now offer up for yourselves a burnt Offering, lest I
" deal with you after your Folly." JOB 42. 7. 8.

NEW - L O N D O N :
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T H E
P R E F A C E.

I Take no pleasure in noisy controversies and contentious disputes, neither will I be engaged in any such. Matters which have any relation to the kingdom of God, which is the dominion of truth, righteousness and peace, ought to be discoursed with great fairness, calmness and equity.

I have no envy towards any man, nor the least disposition to lessen the just reputation, and sully the honor of any of my brethren in the ministry; but should rejoice to see them all, by a clear manifestation of the truth, and calm, consistent testimony against hurtful errors, commend themselves, throughout, to every man's conscience in the sight of God. I have no quarrel against any of the gentlemen, some of whose sentiments are remarked upon in the following dialogue, nor will I.

'Tis error, hurtful error that I censure and contend against, not men. Such gentlemen as have distinguishing marks of honor conferred on them by public societies, I would willingly, as is fit, give honor to: But then they are expected to do more than barely to shew the feathers in their caps;

caps ; they must shew themselves worthy of them. It is doing such too great honor, to connive at errors because they embrace and teach them.

Hurtful errors ought to have no sanctuary ; not to be protected from just censure, under the covert of a bishop's gown nor even under the shadow of the throne ; for they are laid under censure by a just sentence given from the supreme throne. And it is too dangerous to countenance what God has condemned, and contradict what he has said.

The following dialogue has been shewn to most of the gentlemen in the ministry, in my neighbourhood, who have given it me as their opinion, that it is necessary to bear a public testimony against the dangerous errors which are spreading among our churches, and that the following testimony is so calulated to serve the interest of truth, that it will be for the edification of the churches to publish it. And as no public testimony is preparing, at present, against a most destructive scheme of false doctrines, breaking in upon us as a flood, that I know of, I present this to the public ; desiring all to whom it may come, calmly and impartially to weigh the things which are offered to their consideration, by

Their Servant

in the gospel of Jesus Christ,

WILLIAM HART.

BRIEF



BRIEF REMARKS, &c.

A Clergyman and a Gentleman of the Laity, his acquaintance and friend, being in company together the other day, their conversation, by insensible steps, led them into the following
DIALOGUE.

GENTLEMAN. I HAVE observed, sir, that you gentlemen of the clergy, though you differ in sentiments from one another, yet all claim to yourselves the honor of being orthodox; and the same man, tho' he differs from himself in different stages of his life, yea, and even at the same time, and in the same discourse, yet is orthodox still, and inconsistent and contrary propositions are sound doctrine. How is this to be accounted for? Does orthodoxy follow the motions of the clergy, as the shadow upon the dial does that of the sun? And when your motions are retrograde, does orthodoxy go backward like the shadow upon the dial of *Abaz*?

CLERGY-

CLERGYMAN. You are merry upon us, sir. But we are agreed in this, that true orthodoxy is a fixed thing, and that the holy scriptures are the only true rule of faith, and standard by which doctrines of religion are to be tried, and determined to be orthodox or not. We may possibly differ in our understanding of the sense of the scriptures, in some things. So do the gentlemen, and judges of the law in their interpretations of the law, in some particulars. But it don't at all follow from thence, that true orthodoxy, either in law or divinity, is a wavering or uncertain thing : it only shews that men are fallible. We may possibly err in some things, in our profession, as well as the best of men in other professions ; but I hope we don't willingly err from the truth in any thing.

GENT. I am glad, sir, to find your thoughts so just : But I believe it is a pretty difficult thing, for men who are teachers of others by office, and have presided in the church a number of years, to be *themselves perfectly teachable*.

CLERG. It is indeed so : and if we are not truly humble we shall not be so. If the desire of worldly honor and pre-eminence, and love of the praise of men prevails in us above the desire of pleasing God, and being approved by our great master, we shall become obstinate in
defending

defending our own unhappy mistakes, and sooner run into two popular errors than acknowledge one. However, we ought all of us, to sit at the feet of Jesus with as much humility and meek teachableness as the least of our hearers, that we may hear and learn of him, and be corrected by him, wherein we have unhappily erred from his truth, and willingly receive his corrections of our errors, by whose hands they are ministered to us.

GENT. I am right well pleased with your modest and just sentiments ; and wish all the gentlemen of your order, throughout the christian world, had them written on their hearts.

CLERG. I wish so too, and that they may be deeply engraved upon mine, and ever be attended to.

GENT. Under the influence of these tho'ts, and in your present temper of mind, I believe you will be an impartial examiner, and justly censure such errors in religion as deserve censure. I will therefore, if it be agreeable to you, sir, mention to you several things which I have collected out of sundry discourses of several of our clergy, which have been lately published, which appear to me very wrong, and of very evil tendency ; some of which are, I think, nearly related to *Sandeman's* heresies, and desire your thoughts upon them.

CLERG.

CLERG. Do as you please, sir. As to *Sandeman*, his books are written in a very artful manner, but are, in my opinion, the worst and most pernicious of any that ever I read, which were pretended to serve the cause of christianity. What the author's design was in writing them, I do not pretend to say; but the tendency of his scheme of doctrine, represented by him as the true gospel scheme, is to pervert and turn the gospel into ridicule, and in the issue to serve the interest of deism. It is to me very surprising that any of our clergy should go into his sentiments, so far as some of them seem to have done. I am sure these things disserve the interest of christian truth and virtue.

GENT. I will then first mention some of the things I have collected out of two discourses of Dr. *Whitaker*, lately printed in *London*.

CLERG. I have not the happiness of any particular acquaintance with the Dr. but have heard some things spoken of him to his honor, and with the discourses you refer to, were calculated to do him more honor than they do. I have read them, and confess my expectations were greatly disappointed. I observed sundry particulars which I greatly dislike, and think the general plan of the discourse is wrong. But what are the things you have remarked as erroneous?

GENT.

GENT. Passing by various lesser matters, I will only mention some things which appear to me of importance. And first, the Dr. says,

p. 7. "Man's enmity is the cause why God became *his enemy* ; and this enmity or anger of God is most reasonable and righteous."

CLERG. The Dr. does not do well to represent God's holy displeasure against man for his first apostacy and rebellion, as the same with enmity. They are as different from each other as the displeasure of a gracious, compassionate father towards an offending child, is from the hatred of an enemy. But if God did become his enemy, whence did he love him so, as to give his own Son to save him ? The Dr. shall be his own corrector. He says, p. 27. "The gift of Christ was the effect, not the cause of God's love."

GENT. I believe your tho'ts are right, sir ; but the Dr. says further, p. 10. "It is good, just and reasonable for God to be an enemy to rebellious man : It *was* and *is* infinitely just and *reasonable* for God to *treat* him as an *enemy*."

CLERG. How came he then to be infinitely kind to him, and love him while in his enmity and rebellion ? Can directly opposite affections and methods of treatment towards the same person, under the same character and

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circumstances, be both infinitely reasonable? If not, then, supposing the Dr.'s assertion is true, God's good-will and kindness towards rebellious man is infinitely unreasonable.

GENT. Your answers encourage me to proceed. The Dr. quoting these words of the apostle, Rom. 3. 25, 26. *Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation, thro' faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past—that he might be just, and the justifier of him that believes in Jesus*, says, "From this scripture it plainly appears, that
 " the great end for which Christ was made a
 " sacrifice for sin, was to declare, manifest,
 " vindicate and honor the righteousness of
 " God," (that is, as he explains himself, his punishing justice) "not to declare his kindness,
 " and persuade men that God is very merciful
 " and ready to forgive them." And he says that
 " men are of themselves too ready to believe
 " this without any arguments and persuasions,"
 and thence infers, p. 26. "Therefore Christ
 " did not come into the world to declare or
 " demonstrate that God is merciful, for it was
 " not doubted before; but it was to manifest
 " the truth and righteousness of God disco-
 " vered in the law."——What say you to these things, sir?

CLERG. In the first place I say, the Dr. here
 inverts

inverts the order of the gospel, and spreads a very dishonoring cloud over the glory of this dispensation. The scripture every where represents the immediate and *grand* design of Christ's appearing and suffering in the flesh, as being to manifest God's mercy, and to minister to and accomplish the designs of his love to man: He became a sacrifice, to the honor of justice, only as an expedient to open the way for mercy or love to do all the good pleasure of its will, in consistence with justice; as the apostle says, *that God might be just, and the justifier of the sinner who believes in Jesus*. In this dispensation justice ministers to, and follows the lead of mercy. The Dr. acknowledges the truth in these words, "The love of God broke out first in the glorious act of giving Christ to open a way for its honorable exercise in the salvation of sinners." p. 27.

2dly. The good Dr. has undoubtedly mistaken the sense of the text you mention. By the righteousness of God there, he supposes his punishing justice to be intended; whereas the apostle intends his righteousness in pardoning sin and justifying the sinner; that righteousness of God by which sinners are justified, which the apostle opposes to the righteousness of obedience to the law. This, I think, is very manifest from the apostle's reasoning from
the

the 20th to the 28th verse of this third chapter of Romans. The apostle uses the word righteousness, in the same sense as it is here used in many other texts.

3dly. The Dr. is greatly mistaken in saying, God's mercy in freely pardoning and saving poor guilty sinners, was not doubted before Christ revealed it, and that men are of themselves too prone to believe it. What he observes of carnal, secure sinners easily believing the mercy of God, but not his justice, is to no purpose—they only seem to believe it: If they really believe any thing, it is that they have very little need of mercy. The true trial of their faith is taken from their being bro't under just conviction of their sin and evil desert. And now they are found more easily and earnestly to believe God's justice than his mercy. What a guilty world wanted was a just ground of faith concerning God's mercy and readiness to forgive the penitent, and to be shewn how this can be done consistently with justice, which the guilty do more readily believe; and this is done only by the gospel.—But if it is as the Dr. says, whence is it that our first parents, before they had received any revelation of God's purposes of mercy to them, believed his justice but not his mercy, and were afraid when they heard the voice of their Lord,
and

and hid themselves among the trees? Fear or dread of divine wrath is the natural result of sense of guilt, and what all mankind feel the impression of, and can't be effectually relieved from but by the discovery of God's mercy made by the gospel. Accordingly the apostle speaks of the Gentiles as *mourning without hope*, and says, *Jesus Christ has redeemed those who from fear of death were all their life time subject to bondage.*

GENT. The Dr. says, "To assert that the death of Christ hath caused any reason for our reconciliation to God to exist which did not exist before, and which would not have existed had not Christ died, is to assert that it is now more reasonable to love God than it would otherwise have been. But how could the death of Christ make this more reasonable?" p. 42.

CLERG. The apostle John knew how, and does every sensible christian: He says, *We love him because he first loved us*: and Paul says, *The love of Christ constraineth us*: Which sayings evidently suppose some new motives, and additional reasons to love God, which arise out of this dispensation of grace, and which could never have existed if this dispensation had not taken place.

GENT. The Dr. says again, p. 50. "All
" that

“ that makes it reasonable to love God now
 “ would have existed if Christ had never died.

CLERG. The love of God in giving his Son to die for us, is constantly and justly represented in scripture as a new, peculiar and powerful reason, why we should love and be reconciled to him, see 2 Cor. 5. 20, 21. Now according to the Dr. if Christ never had died this reason would have existed in the same strength it does now ; that is, if God had not so loved the world as to give his Son to die for us, yet he would still have so loved us. I know the Dr. will not admit this ; and for this reason he should not have laid down the premise.

GENT. He also says, “ The sacrifice of Christ, and the love of God, does not make it more reasonable for sinners to return, (that is, to God and their duty) “ than it was before, only that it is an additional obligation on.” p. 50.

CLERG. That is, only as it makes it more abundantly reasonable. I had rather be without the honor of making new discoveries of the mysteries of divinity, than to take up with such poor ones as serve to no other purpose than to set people a staring.

GENT. I am of your mind, sir. But the good Dr. has made some other discoveries which

which possibly you may like better. I will in the next place give you some of the things he says concerning the natural enmity of the hearts of the children of Adam against God. Speaking of this natural enmity as an enmity to God's whole character, he says, "This contrariety to God is innate and interwoven with the very frame of our hearts," p. 15.

CLERG. Is this consistent with Mr. Edwards's doctrine? He says, *There is not the least need of supposing any evil quality infused, implanted, or wrought into the nature of man by any positive cause or influence whatever; or of supposing that man is conceived and born with a preternatural stain of evil in his heart, such as is any thing properly positive, in order to account for a sinful corruption of nature.**

GENT. The Dr. says, "That man, thro' the first apostacy, lost *all taste* for moral beauty and excellency; the perfections of the Deity became hateful in his view, the objects of his *utter aversion*."

CLERG. There is a moral beauty and excellence in equity, righteousness, veracity, faithfulness, goodness, benignity, bountifulness, mercy, compassion, pity, placableness, readiness to forgive and overcome evil with good. These are the characters of that great Being, whose

* Edwards's Answer to Taylor, p. 316.

whose we are. There is a moral deformity, ugliness and baseness in all the contrary characters, tempers and actions. Is the present frame or constitution of human nature such so totally *inverted*, that God is hated as being thus excellent, and morally perfect? Are his righteousness, equity, goodness, kindness, &c. in their nature hateful in our view of them 'till we are new made? Do we hate them as being what they are in themselves? Are they the objects of our utter aversion? If so, doubtless we naturally approve the contrary vices. They are beautiful, excellent and amiable characters in our view and taste of them. And if this is the case with man, this hatred of all moral excellence, as such, must shew itself in a proportionable hatred of it in men, as they appear to bear any resemblance to God: for nature is consistent with itself.

GENT. The Dr. acknowledges this consequence, saying, "The more resemblance any persons bear to the divine perfections, the more they are conformed to Jesus Christ, the more they are treated like their glorious head by those who hate God and his ways." p. 20. That is, as he must be understood, by all natural men, and on account of those virtues by which they resemble him.

CLERG. I hope it will be allowed that those who

who are *followers of that which is good*, are,
 therein, followers of God, and conformed to
 Jesus Christ. Now the apostle Peter says,
*Who is he that will harm you if ye be followers
 of that which is good?* 1 Pet. 3. 13. Implying
 that moral good is not naturally hateful to men,
 but rather approved and countenanced as good,
 in their esteem. But I won't insist on this
 now, for our new apostles have thrown the old
 ones quite out of the saddle. But if it is as
 the Dr. says, we ought to see this utter aversion
 to all that is morally good and Christ-like
 universally expressed in the life and actions of
 all unconverted men. But do we see them
 generally express such a hatred and utter a-
 version to equitable conduct, in cases where
 they are uninterested? to all the expressions
 and actions of justice, goodness, kindness, gra-
 ciousness, compassion, meekness, forbearance,
 placableness, veracity and faithfulness? Do we
 see the contrary vices generally approved and
 recommended by natural men, in instances where
 they are uninterested? All the world are wit-
 nesses to the contrary: It would not be a more
 glaring contradiction to notorious fact to assert,
 that all men walk upon their heads with their
 feet stretched up into the air.—I believe it will
 be found, on a critical examination, that the
 animosity of carnal men to God's character, is an

interested and partial affection, contrary to their own inward and natural sense of what is right and morally good and excellent; like that of a corrupt, bribed judge against the sentence of righteousness. But I don't enlarge here. —

How does the Dr. account for the introduction of that horrible spirit of enmity against the perfections of God, and all moral excellence which he speaks of as the character of the human heart ever since Adam's offence?

GENT. He says, "Whether this hatred of God or depravity arises from the withdrawing the aids of his Spirit, or from some positive viciousness, I shall not spend time to determine, tho' I believe the former." p. 11.

CLERG. If so, he ought not to have said that this hatred is "innate and interwoven with the very frame of our hearts." But the good gentleman's faith in this particular was very short-liv'd; for by the time he came to the fourteenth page, he changed his mind and says, "It is clear that this enmity arises from the viciousness of our hearts, and that it is innate and interwoven with their very frame." And this notion runs through the remainder of his discourse.

GENT. It does so. He says, p. 19. "All natural men's hearts are so contrary to all God's perfections that nothing can give them
" greater

greater pain, or render them more miserable than a sight of them as they are in him."

CLERG. Yes, doubtless it must give a poor sinner great torment to hear God saying of himself, *I am the Lord God, gracious and merciful, slow to anger, abundant in goodness and truth, forgiving iniquity, transgression and sin, and by no means clearing the guilty*; and calling to him, saying, *Wherefore, turn thou unto me and live*. Or shall we say that God has drawn his own character wrong, that the Dr. may be justified?—But if the case be so as he says it is, I don't see how any discoveries of God's glory to the minds of sinners, or any sense of it impressed on their hearts, can be a means of reconciling them to him: It should seem rather calculated to inflame the disease than to cure it.

GENT. The Dr. is aware of this consequence and approves it, and it is one essential part of his system of orthodoxy. He says, p. 18. "The nature of man and the nature of God are opposite to each other." And p. 35. "God's character is so contrary to fallen men, that the more they know of him the more does their enmity stir and exert itself against him, till by the renewing of the Holy Ghost they are conformed to the divine image."

CLERG. If it be so, the manifestation of the glory

glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ to the mind and heart of a sinner, is the most unsuitable means that can be used to convert and reconcile him ; it is like throwing oil into fire in order to quench it ; and the devil is satisfied in his politics, in endeavoring to blind the eyes of unconverted people lest the light of the glorious gospel of Jesus Christ should shine unto them.

GENT. Well, the Dr. also says, " The
 " wonderful manifestation of his (God's) love
 " and grace, in the gospel, with all the moving
 " and melting accents of his mercy, are
 " not sufficient to prevail with one sinner to
 " make up the quarrel with God.—The sacrifice
 " of Christ, and the love of God manifested
 " therein, is not *sufficient, by way of motive,*
 " to prevail with one sinner to return
 " to him." p. 44.—Again, " The manifestation
 " of divine glory by Christ transcends
 " every other method in which God hath re-
 " vealed his perfection, and unfolds more of
 " his nature and attributes than the works of
 " creation and providence.——But all this
 " serves not to engage unrenewed man to love,
 " but more sensibly to abhor God, in proportion
 " to the clearer manifestation of his nature
 " and perfections. For if there is enmity in
 " our hearts to God, the clearer views we have
 of

of him, the more will it work and shew
 itself, till a change takes place," p. 50, 51.
 think the Dr. is now quite perfect in his way.
 CLERG. If the case is such, Jesus Christ
 expressed himself very improperly when he said,
I be lifted up, I will draw all men unto me;
 and when he makes the drawing influence of
 the truth the great instrument of engaging men
 to come to him, saying, *No man can come unto*
me except the Father draw him. It is written
in the prophets, and they shall all be taught of
God. Every one therefore that hath heard and
*learned of the Father cometh unto me.** And
 it is to no purpose to address unconverted men
 in the apostle's manner, saying, *We beseech you*
and pray you, in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to
God; for he hath made him sin for us, that we
might be made the righteousness of God in him.†
 For the hearts of men are so monstrously fra-
 gmented, that moral and gospel motives can take
 no hold of them, till they are first new-made,
without the word; but the more gospel truth
 draws them, so much the more they pull back.
 These are no more calculated to draw such
 hearts, than they are to draw a cart. But I
 can more easily believe the Dr. has blundered
 into a gross and abominable error, than admit
 these things as true. But if it is as the Dr.
 says, that "the sacrifice of Christ, and the love
 and

* John 7. 44, 45.

† 2 Cor. 5. 20, 21,

and the melting mercy of God are not sufficient, by way of motive, to prevail with our sinner to be reconciled to him," no possible motives are sufficient, and there is an end of all reasoning with them; and ministers might as well preach to their people the doctrines of Mahomet as of CHRIST, for any good effect of them.

GENT. The Dr. acknowledges it, saying
 " God takes much pains to persuade man to
 " be reconciled to him, yet, alas! the enmity
 " remains; man is still totally averse to a reconciliation;
 " conciliation; and all the threatnings and
 " promises, all the intreaties and arguments
 " which can be proposed, are insufficient to
 " overcome and bow his will and reconcile
 " him to God. Natural men laugh at his
 " counsels and despise his reproof; and so they
 " will do till the arm of God's power is revealed
 " vealed to make them willing." p. 33, 34
 I think the Dr. must be understood to intend
 here a different kind of power from the moral
 power of gospel truth and love; for this power
 is opposed by him to the persuasive power of
 the gospel: that can effect nothing; this alone
 can subdue the enmity and make the sinner
 willing. So the Dr. robs the gospel of all its
moral power over the minds of sinners, and of
 all the glory of drawing men to God, or persuading

ding them to be reconciled to him. The Gospel, in his hands, is rendered as weak as the law ; whereas it was in the apostles time, *power of God.* *The law of the Spirit of Life Christ Jesus,* says Paul, *bath made me free from the law of sin.**

CLERG. If it is as the Dr. says, to what purpose is all this pains taken with these poor mad-hearted creatures, in reasoning with, and persuading them, when the nature of the hereditary disease is known to be such that power alone, and not argument and moral force is adapted to cure it? If his Majesty, out of his pity to the poor, mad creatures, confined in Bedlam, should send his bishops among them from week to week, and from year to year, to preach to them, and exhort them to lay aside their wrong and wild imaginations, and become sober and reasonable, what high thoughts should we entertain of his Majesty's wisdom, and great skill in curing madness? But if we knew his Majesty perfectly understood the nature of their disease, and knew that all this parade of preaching, reasoning and exhorting to them could effect nothing, and that he could otherwise cure their disease by the exercise of mechanic power, what thoughts should we have of his sincerity, and of his professed love and pity to those poor creatures? How shocking
is

* Rom. 8, 3.

is the injury and dishonor which is done the all-wise and most gracious God, by such infamous misrepresentations of him, as the doctrine before us gives ! Gentlemen who talk in this wild manner would do well to lay to heart the words of Job, whereby he reproves the partial, perverse reasonings of his friends, *Will you speak wickedly for God, and talk deceitfully for him ? Will you accept his person ? Shall not his excellency make you afraid, and his dread fall upon you ? Surely he will reprove you.*

GENT: The Dr. says, “ No moral arguments, except the terrors of the Lord, are adapted to influence carnal sinners to attend to their salvation.” p. 53.

CLERG. If so, Jesus Christ and his holy apostles were very injudicious preachers, and took abundance of impertinent pains to persuade sinners ; and yet no man ever persuaded them so successfully : the multitude flocked about Jesus to hear his preaching. Did he thunder and terrify them as at the mount that was covered with blackness, and burned with fire, and quaked with fear ? No : *They wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth, and their eyes were fastened upon him.*——But suppose it is as the Dr. here says, that “ no moral arguments except the terrors of the Lord are adapted to influence carnal sinners

pers, &c." He also says, p. 34. "They
 spise his reproof: and so they will do till
 the arm of God's power is revealed to make
 them willing." So you see the terrors of the
 word can have no more influence than his love.
 There is some edification in seeing men who
 contradict the truth, at the same time incon-
 sistent with themselves.

GENT. The Dr. lays it down as a just infe-
 rence from what he said before concerning the
 nature and power of the enmity of man's heart
 against the nature and moral character of God,
 that "men are not converted to God by moral
 suasion, i. e. by any rational arguments
 whereby their hearts are influenced to turn
 from sin to God." p. 50. He adds, "The
 minds of men are too full of enmity to God,
 to be persuaded to love and be reconciled to
 him, by any, tho' the most powerful argu-
 ments, addressed to their understanding, or
 affections; therefore I don't think that re-
 generation is effected by light, i. e. by pre-
 senting the things of religion to their minds,
 or even by *opening their eyes to see them*; but
 in order to this the power of God must be
 exerted, and by this alone men are created
 anew." p. 53.

CLERG. If the premises are true, the infe-
 rence is undoubtedly just. If a man has wo-

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ven into his frame and constitution, a fixed incurable aversion and detestation to all sweetness it is in vain to go about to cure this constitutional aversion by feeding him with sugar and honey : His constitution must be mechanically changed before he can be reconciled to them. So if the case be with man as the Dr. says is, the very frame of his nature must be altered before he can be brought to love God : In view of his moral perfections, and gospel truths can do nothing towards working this change but this must first be wrought by absolute power, before these truths can take any hold on the heart. This change, according to the Dr. is wrought only by the exertion of a power of the holy Spirit upon the soul of man, altogether of a different kind from the power of divine truth and love, a power which produces its effects, not by moral exertions and means but by a physical, forcible exertion of strength. This is the darling doctrine of the Sandemanian divines, the quintessence of the new orthodoxy.

GENT. Well ; but the Dr. speaking of the means by which God ordinarily brings men to be reconciled to him, says, p. 48. “ God “ effects the new birth by his own almighty “ power, yet he makes use of means in order “ thereto. He deals with men as rational “ creatures, proposes all those motives and “ argu-

arguments to their consideration, which would be sufficient to engage their love to him, were it not for their hatred of his unchangeable perfections; and these motives have a powerful influence on all those whose hearts are conformed to God in regeneration. Preaching the gospel is the ordinary means which God makes use of to reconcile sinners to himself; and it is as well calculated to work on the minds of sinners as any means can possibly be: But yet all the motives the gospel sets before sinners will be ineffectual, without the agency of divine power to renew their hearts and conform them to his glorious character."

CLERG. God does indeed treat men as rational creatures, capable of being persuaded, or drawn to be reconciled to him by gospel motives and arguments: and this is to me a demonstration that they are so; but the Dr. says they are not; that their inwrought enmity is of such a kind that all those means can have no effect, till they are first renewed; then he allows they will have a powerful influence. If God treats man, in the gospel dispensation, as being what he is not; which is to treat him contrary to truth, improperly and wrong, and solemnly applies a course of means for the cure of sinners, which can have no effect till the cure

cure is first wrought by a different kind of application. He that imputes folly, and for absurd conduct to his Maker, let him answer it.

GENT. I don't know how he can, other wise than on his knees, with Job's confession in his mouth, *Behold I am vile ; what shall I answer thee ? I will lay my hand on my mouth. Once have I spoken, but I will not answer ; yea twice, but I will proceed no further.*

I will now let the Dr. rest ; but have a few things collected from Mr. Hopkins, out of many, which are very faulty, which I deliver your thoughts upon.—In his treatise, intituled *An Enquiry concerning the Promises of the Gospel*, he says, p. 124, 125. “ The awakened, convinced sinner, who has taken a great deal of pains in the use of means, and has hereby got a great degree of instruction and knowledge, and yet remains impenitent, is in this respect, much more guilty and vile, and a greater criminal in God's sight, than if he had never attained to this conviction and knowledge : yea, his impenitence, and all his other sins, are so aggravated by the light and conviction he obtains, that whatever particular ways of known sin he has forsaken, and how many soever external duties he attends upon, yet, on the whole, he is undoubtedly

doubtedly a greater sinner than he was when he lived in security, and the neglect of the means of grace. So that the impenitent, unregenerate sinner does not grow better, but rather worse by all the instruction and knowlege he gets in the use of means. And awakened, convinced sinners, with whom most means are used, and who are most attentive to the concerns of their souls, and most in earnest in the use of means, are commonly, if not always, really more guilty & odious in God's sight than they who are secure and at ease in their sins.—p. 127. “If these things be so, then the sinners who continue impenitent under the greatest convictions of conscience, and the most concern about their souls and salvation, and are consequently taking the most pains, and using unwearied endeavors, are usually the greatest sinners, really more guilty, more vicious and vile than they were when in a state of security, and lived in a great measure in the neglect of the means of grace. And if they live and die impenitent, their condemnation will be more intolerable than if they never had that conviction and knowlege, which by their attention to the gospel they have attained.” How do you like these things, sir?

CLERG. Not at all, 'Tis usual for enlight-
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ned, convinced sinners to complain that they grow worse: they see more of their own badness than formerly, and so imagine they really grow more wicked, and are in danger of being discouraged. But it is a new thing to teach them doctrinally, that they really do so, and are more odious to God in proportion as they are more awakened, and take more pains to become better, as Hopkins does. This is a ready way to throw them directly into the devil's arms. If this author was alone in these sentiments, I would not trouble myself with any attention to them; but as they are embraced and taught by too many, I will a little remark upon them.—This gentleman puts the case of a sinner who by his attention to the gospel is enlightned, has gained much christian knowlege, and is under strong convictions, and is thereby put upon using his best endeavors to obtain mercy and grace, in the use of the means of grace, and engaged to abstain from his old ways of sin, and carefully to practise outward duties. Such he supposes to be still *impenitent*. By which he must be understood to intend that his repentance does not spring from the highest motives or principles, a supreme love to God and holiness, and a disinterested governing hatred of sin, and so is not of the saving kind. For such a sinner as he here describes does
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pent in some sort. He has a change of mind
 and conduct with respect to sin and duty, with
 respect to God and the eternal world, which
 effected by the knowledge and belief he has
 obtained of gospel truths. Hopkins describes
 him as forsaking and abstaining from his old
 sins, (sorry, no doubt, that he ever practised
 them) as reforming his life and practising the
 duties of religion, as far as he can, and as ear-
 nestly seeking God's mercy and salvation in the
 careful use of the appointed means of grace ;
 and in a word, as going as far as he can under
 the influence of common grace, and the highest
 illuminations and influences of the Spirit of
 God, by the word, which are short of regene-
 rating and saving. Is he now become a grea-
 ter sinner than he was before ? Is he now more
 guilty and vile, and odious to God than he
 would have been if his mind and conduct was
 contrary to what it is ? The motives he acts
 upon are suggested to his mind by the word
 and Spirit of God. If they are not the highest
 motives, they are *true motives, gospel motives*
 to such a conduct as he now observes ; and the
 conduct is such as is required, though not the
 whole that is required. Is it then more wick-
 ed to act right in part, than not at all ? to be
 influenced to do part of our duty, by some of
 the reasons and motives God sets before sinners
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to engage them thereto, than to be influenced by none of them, and do no part of our duty but to despise them all? Is it a viler thing for a poor sinner to believe and fear God's wrath and endeavor to flee from it, than to disbelieve and despise it, and run upon the point of his sword? Is it more odious to God to hear a sinner, under deep conviction, cry to him for mercy, than to hear him prophane his name and imprecate his curse upon his head? Is a thief, who being hardened in his first theft goes presumptuously and commits a second less guilty than he would have been, if convinced of his first sin, he had brought again that which he stole, and seriously asked God's forgiveness?

GENT. It is said that the awakened, convinced sinner acts upon selfish principles and motives in all that he does in religion, not from the love, and for the glory of God; and this is a wicked thing.

CLERG. God acts with a view to his own glory, and to our true interest, subordinate thereto; and requires that we do so too. If the convinced sinner can't yet act upon the first and highest motive, yet in acting as he ought on the subordinate principle, he acts right as far as he goes, and as God wills him to do, though he does not go so far as he ought.

His

his present conduct is therefore criminal in a degree than it would be if he neither respected the glory of God, nor cared for his own soul and future well-being. And he who acts right now, as far as he can, may, through the grace of God, attain to act also upon the best principles : But if men will not be influenced by the lower, there is no probability that they will ever have given them the higher.

GENT. Mr. Hopkins seems to make the increased wickedness of the convinced sinner be the result of his increased light. He says, His impenitence and all his other sins are so aggravated by the light and conviction he attains that," &c.

CLERG. When, in proportion as light increases, men's enmity and opposition to the truth, and obstinacy in their evil ways increase, they do indeed grow more vile and odious in God's sight, and in men's too. So it was with the incorrigible, malicious Pharisees, as our Lord observes of them, *If I had not done among them the works which no other man did, they had not had sin ; but now they have no cloak for their sin. Now they have both seen and hated both me and my father.* But the case of the convinced sinner which Mr. Hopkins puts, is widely different from this. He does not strive against his convictions, and maliciously resist and rebel

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against the light which shines in his mind, but submits to its reproofs, and amends his way and applies himself to do his duty as he is able is struggling against his lust, and cries out, *wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me* and cries to God for mercy and deliverance. If his repentance is imperfect, so is his present light: It is proportioned to his light; if one is short of saving, so is the other. Where, what then is the great aggravation of his present sins by the light he has obtained, above that of all his sins in his careless state of mind? I wonder gentlemen will talk so absurdly.— Indeed, if it were true as Dr. Whitaker says “that the more natural men are enlightened the more they necessarily hate and abhor God, Hopkins’s doctrine would also be true: But then the scriptures would be false; for they certainly teach a contrary doctrine to these.— This doctrine reflects great dishonor upon the holy Spirit; for it is under his influence that sinners are awakened and put upon seeking mercy in an earnest attendance on the means of religion: It also strongly tends to dishearten and discourage awakened sinners from applying themselves to the means of religion, and to make them desperately bold in wickedness.

GENT. Mr. Hopkins says (upon his principles) “There is reason why the sinner should
“diligently

diligently attend all means of instruction and knowlege, and sufficient encouragement hereto. For without this instruction and knowlege the sinner can't be saved." p.127.

CLERG. A very poor encouragement is then sufficient. This thought, that let him do his best he only becomes more guilty, vicious and vile than he would be if he shut his eyes and snuggled away in the dark, at all adventures, will not greatly encourage him to open them : this reflection, that he only becomes more wicked by all his endeavors and prayers to become better, and that if he fails at last, it will be much worse with him forever, than it would have been if he had never troubled his head about these matters, can never animate his heart in striving to enter in at the straight gate ; And a persuasion, that by all he does, or can do, he only becomes more odious in the sight of God, than he would be if he cared for none of these things, will never convince him that such seeking as he is capable of, is a likely means for obtaining what he seeks.—These discouraging thoughts are wholly unballanced by these other thoughts, viz. " that without that knowlege and conviction which makes the sinner worse, he can't be saved ; and that this knowlege can be obtained only in the use of means." If you urge a poor, guilty, concerned,

cerned, low-spirited sinner to earnest, persevering diligence in seeking God's mercy and grace in the use of means, upon these principles, telling him that without this knowledge and application he can't be saved, he will readily reply, that he has become much worse already by the pains he has taken in seeking God, and that the more he does, he shall only become the more odious and vile in his sight; and you shall never persuade him that this is a likely way to obtain his mercy; that if your principles are true, the best way is to sit still and do nothing: If God designs to save him, he shall be brought home one time or other; and if not, that he shall be less miserable in this way than in that you urge him to. Upon these principles, 'tis so far from being true that there is *sufficient* encouragement to a poor sinner to seek, that he has *no true* encouragement at all. This doctrine is a perfect *snare of the fowler* to poor, ignorant, perplexed souls.—Such tho'ts and reasonings, used formerly, sometimes, to be secretly suggested, and urged upon the minds of awakened, concerned sinners, by the devil, with a view to discourage them from seeking; and it has ever been the care of skilful and tender guides of souls to detect the sophistry of the deceiver, and deliver poor sinners out of these snares, craftily laid for them. But what

terrible advantage has the enemy gotten against us *now*, that his vile suggestions and en-
 luring, false reasonings are mingled in with
 the doctrines of Jesus Christ, publicly taught
 and defended as doctrines of God, from the
 sacred desk, and by the press, by guides of the
 flock of God ! Is this the fruit of our boasted
 zeal against errors, and of our refining upon
 orthodoxy ? We seem, some of us, to have
 refined all the spirit and virtue of it away, and
 to be bringing in a system of errors, which have
 the most destructive influence upon the interest
 of virtue and genuine christianity. What
 have we done that God should set loose the
 spirit of error among us in so awful and threat-
 ening a manner ? Are our churches so far de-
 parted from the faith as to approve of these
 things ? If so, our glory is departing ; if not,
 they ought *strongly* to testify their disappro-
 bation.

GENT. I had thoughts of mentioning several
 particulars in a sermon of Rev. Timothy
 Allen, on these words, *What is Truth ?* which
 are, I think, very wrong ; but I fear to be too
 tedious.

CLERG. I have seen the sermon you mention.
 It is a very bad one, and abounds with Sande-
 manian errors : and the author is heretical in
 his notions of the Trinity, and has many other
 wild

wild imaginations. But his reputation and influence are so much sunk, that there is no great danger of his doing much mischief; so we will take no further notice of him.

GENT. I had thoughts also of giving you a few extracts from some of Dr. Bellamy's writings, which, I think, deserve censure; but they don't lie directly in your road; so I pass them by. I think he has not published much upon the Sandemanian errors: But it is said that in his discourse delivered at the college chapel last commencement, he advanced this notion of Dr. Whitaker's, viz. "That regeneration is not effected by light, but preceded by faith, and is wrought by the absolute power of the Spirit."

CLERG. I did not hear that discourse; but have heard several gentlemen who were present speak of it, who gave me much the same account of his doctrine as you do; and said that many of our most judicious, orthodox divines were much offended with it. However, I hope the Dr. is not gone fully into this new scheme. He is a gentleman of so much sense that upon further reflection, I presume he will retract that erroneous notion concerning regeneration, if he has ever at all admitted it, and approve himself sound in the faith, and thereby give joy to his brethren, whom he once made sad.

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That scheme of errors which we have been marking upon is bad in it's self, and worse in it's consequences ; fatally destructive of christianity. These which follow are inevitable consequences of these false notions, viz.

First, That the enmity of natural men to God is not a *moral* disease, but a constitutional, mental, mechanical madness, if such an expression may be admitted. For moral diseases are, from their nature, as moral, curable, if at all, *only* by moral means, and the exertion of a moral power. But this disease of our nature, according to these new notions, is curable by power only, only by the exertion of power as different from the power of divine truth and love, as a mechanic power is from a syllogism.

Another consequence is, that natural man is not a moral agent. How can he be so, if his nature is such that moral truth and motive necessarily produce effects in him contrary to their nature? as Dr. Whitaker's doctrine says they do. He is a moral monster, and mad by nature. Is such a creature a fit subject of moral government?

Another necessary consequence is, that it is to no more purpose to urge gospel truths and motives on unconverted men, to persuade them to be reconciled to God, than to reason with a mad

mad man, with a view to cure him of his distraction ; and that the gospel ministry, as it respects the unconverted, is the vainest, foolish, and absurdest thing in the whole world. What would you think of the conduct of a physician, who, with a shew of great compassion to a sick and distracted servant, should prescribe to him, and command him to take a course of medicines in order to his cure, which (though of excellent virtue in some cases) he knows are not at all adapted to his case, but will only inflame his disease and make him more raving : and because he does not mend, but grows worse under the use of these means, kindles wrath against him, and commands him to be burnt to death as a despiser and abuser of his love and care for him, saying, with tears of seeming compassion in his eyes, I would have healed you, but you would not be healed ? *Tears, as deceitful as Judas's kisses.*

GENT. I should think him the most false, unreasonable and cruel person in the whole world : And the doctrines which imply such horrible consequences, most certainly, are not from above, but from beneath.

CLERG. Doubtless they are so. We justly abhor the rack and inquisition as instruments of great cruelty. But this system of false doctrines prepares torments for souls in travail.

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Another consequence is, that there is no preparatory work of the Spirit, no influence of common grace which does at all prepare and dispose men to receive the kingdom of God; but that the most careless, abandoned and profligate wretches are as near to the kingdom of God, and as well disposed to receive it as the most enlightned, concerned, and earnest seeker. A Quaker avows this consequence, and makes it a pillar in his building. And Dr. Whitaker and Mr. Hopkins, upon their principles must admit it, if they will be self-consistent. For he says, the more natural men see of God's character, the more their hatred to it arises; and the other says, the more they know of gospel truth and strive to enter in at the straight gate, the worse they grow. If these things are true, common grace is no grace. It is, not only, eventually no favor to those who never obtain special grace, through their abuse of it; but it is no grace to such, in its nature, tendency, and design: And all the common influences of the holy Spirit on them are vain triflings. They are a means that don't at all prepare the subject for the end that is professedly aimed at by them—And sinners can't, in equity, be answerable for not profiting by them; for they are not improvable by them to any spiritual advantage.

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Another necessary consequence of this scheme is, that the Spirit of Christ, acting in character as the great teacher of his truth and love, an enlightner and drawer of souls, can do no more towards converting sinners, than you or I can. We used to think and say, as our venerable fathers taught us, and the holy apostles before them, that men, and ministers of the gospel can't convert sinners and draw them to God because they can only speak the quickning converting truths into their ears; but that the Spirit of Christ, by speaking it into their hearts prevails, and divinely persuades and draws them home to God in Christ. But according to our new divines, this internal teaching can do no more towards converting the soul than the merely external. The holy Spirit acting as the Spirit of truth and endearing love, upon the minds and hearts of poor sinners can effect nothing. The more clearly and strongly he represents and impresses the glorious truth upon them, the more furiously they rage in their enmity against the truth, and the fountain of truth. Their enmity turns the edge of his sword: "*The sword of the Spirit is the word of God,*" with which he was girded when he was sent forth from the Father, by the Son as his minister, to subdue the enmity of men and make them willing captives to the Saviour.

but he can effect nothing by it ; the harder he strikes the head of this enmity with his sword, the stronger and more lively it grows : (for the more natural men see of God's character and glory in the face of Jesus Christ, the more does their enmity rise and exert itself ; if we may believe our new teachers.) In short, he is quite defeated, in the use of his own proper weapons, by every foolish sinner ; And if he will conquer at last, he finds himself obliged to throw away his sword, and betake himself to a very different kind of power, which has nothing more of the moral kind in it, than the action of a watch-maker in taking out of a badly constructed watch a superfluous spring which prevents the action of the true spring. How far the doctrine which draws such horrible consequences, reflects impious dishonor upon the Spirit of Jesus Christ, those gentlemen would do well seriously to consider, who teach it.

GENT. If the covenant people refuse to bear their testimony against such abominable doctrine, the stones of the street will cry out.—But by what further testimonies of scripture could you disprove this scheme ?

CLERG. By innumerable. I only mention two or three. Paul says, *We all with open face*

face, beholding as in a glass (the gospel dispensation) *the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image.* Jesus Christ says to the unconverted Jews, *If ye continue in my word, ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.* The apostle James says, *Of his own will begat he us, with the word of truth,* of gospel truth. And Dr. Whitaker himself after all he has said against the truth, has given full testimony to it, in these words, "A realising view and perception of the moral beauty and glory of God is that which is the motive that first prevails with the sinner to return and be reconciled to him." p. 34.— In this he does indeed contradict himself, as he frequently does in these discourses. But I am glad his thoughts are sometimes right; I hope he will soon become consistently so.

GENT. I wish he may, and all the gentlemen of your cloth; for some of you, by your frequent inconsistencies and self-contradictions, perplex and confound our understandings, and give great occasion of ridicule to those who are disposed to take it.——But though you won't allow this scheme of doctrine to be apostolical and divine, yet I suppose you will admit it as sound Calvinism.

CLERG. No sir, by no means. All judicious Calvinist divines, who understand themselves,

ives, constantly assert that conversion or regeneration is wrought by light, by the moral power of divine truth and love, as believed and realized. They indeed acknowledge the weakness and corruption of human nature since the fall to be such, that men neither will, nor can, believe and realize gospel truth as to be renewed by its influence, unless the Spirit of truth accompany the word and speak it, as it were, to the heart, (which is true): But then the power he exerts is, as they acknowledge, a moral power, i. e. the powerful energy of the Spirit, acting as the Spirit of truth, righteousness and love.*

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A gentleman of sense to whom this dialogue was read, observed that the apostle seems to represent the power by which men are quickened from the deadness of sin, as of the same kind with that by which Jesus Christ was raised from the dead, Eph. 1. 18-20. And that in other texts this is spoken of as the effect of the power of the holy Ghost; which seems to favor Dr. Whitaker's notion of the power by which men are regenerated. Perhaps some others in reading this may have the same objection in their thoughts. I therefore remark a little on that text. The apostle there tells the Ephesian churches that he prayed for them, *that the eyes of their understanding may be enlightened, that they may know what is the hope of God's calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints; and what the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, (which is) according to the working of his mighty power, which he wrought in Jesus Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand, &c.* It is, I think, very manifest that the apostle is speaking of that power which God exerted in quickening them from the moral death of sin, but of a power which he will hereafter exert in favor to them, thus quickened already; a power not to that by which he raised Christ from the dead and exalted him

In Calvin's time there were some who held that regeneration and repentance go before faith. He censures this as error, confutes their reasonings in support of this notion, and maintains that repentance springs from faith as fruit out of a tree ; and says, that regeneration is included in repentance. See his Institutions, b. 3. ch. 3. to which he gives this title, *That we be regenerate by faith* ; and his discourse answers the title.

GENT. Well, be that as it will, it little concerns me. My care is to know what is the doctrine

him to glory, and productive of like effects in them, quickning their mortal bodies, and exalting them to glory with him. — He gives us a perfect explanation of his meaning here, (if it can be thought to need any explanation) in Phil. 3. 20, 21. *For Christ shall change our vile body that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able to subvert all things unto himself.* The moral change of the mind is of an essentially different kind from the literal or mechanical change of the body, and is effected by the exertion of a different kind of power. — Each effect requires a power suited to its nature, and the power proper to one effect, can never produce the other. To argue from one to the other is therefore idle and impertinent. The Spirit of God is possessed of these two different kinds of power, and exerts the one or the other according as he will to produce a change of the moral or physical kind, in moral beings or others. — Exalt the power of the holy Spirit as much as you please, in effecting the moral change in the soul, called regeneration ; but then don't confound it with the power exerted upon dead bodies in quickning and glorifying them ; but consider and represent it according to its nature, as a moral power, which is the power of gospel truth and love, applied by the Spirit of truth and love to the soul, with his own peculiar energy. This will free us from abundance of confusion and absurdity in our thoughts and reasonings on this subject,

doctrine that Jesus Christ, and his holy apostles taught, and to believe and practice accordingly. You have censured the Dr's wrong notions of the enmity of man's heart against God. But is there no such thing as a spirit of enmity against God working in the carnal heart ?

CLERG. Doubtless there is. The apostle says, *the carnal mind is enmity against God*; and sinners find it so in their own experience of the workings of their own hearts.

GENT. And the apostle says, this carnal mind *cannot be subject to the law of God*.

CLERG. And for this reason this carnal temper must be mortified, and a better and holy temper introduced into the mind or heart. The apostle does not say this happy change of mind and heart can't be effected by the influence and power of gospel truth and love, but the contrary. God graciously subdues the enmity, changes and reconciles the soul by letting in the light, and a sweet, attractive sense of his holy truth and love. The new divines indeed are so bold as to say all this is not sufficient to convert and reconcile one soul. But there are more than ten thousand times ten thousand holy, happy saints, whose experience condemns them, and who are prepared to bear their joyful testimony to the quickning, converting power of the gospel.

GENT.

GENT. I highly approve your sentiments, sir, and thank you for the free communication of them. But I should be well pleased to know a little more of your thoughts concerning this monstrous passion of enmity to God's moral character.

CLERG. If it will please you, you shall.— But to set that subject in a clear light, and guard the truth against misrepresentations now, would too much interrupt us: If you please therefore we will reserve this subject for another day's conversation. This is a subject of great importance: for on the wrong defining of this enmity, has been founded a whole system of destructive errors; and by a right stating and explaining of it, they fall to the ground.

GENT. I gladly accept your proposal.— The doctrines which have been above remarked upon, are some of the doctrines which belong to the new scheme of orthodoxy which is spreading among us. Do you think the churches may safely hold their peace, and suffer them to be taught in them?

CLERG. No, sir, unless they may safely suffer the gospel to be perverted, and betrayed into the hands of the deists. This new scheme of divinity is called the *orthodox heresy*, and very justly; for it contains a monstrous medley of great truths, and great errors, utterly inconsistent

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compassionate tenderness towards poor perishing sinners, in their doctrine.

GENT. Well sir, I wish the happy time may soon come. But you acknowledge there is some truth retained in this new scheme, that may perhaps correct the noxious qualities of the errors, and render the whole a safe medicine for souls.

CLERG. The truth has the misfortune and dishonor to be very unequally yoked. I wish they were kept apart. The truth would do much more good, and the errors much less hurt; I believe none at all, but only serve as a foil to set off to advantage the excellence and glory of the truth. But this blundering mixture of new orthodoxy with the old, only serves to spoil both; it is, in one respect, like putting new wine into old bottles: and I think no man, in his right mind, having drank of the old wine, straightway desireth the new, for he saith the old is better.



DIALOGUE Second.

Upon the Subject of Man's Enmity against God.

GENT. YOU remember, sir, that yesterday you gave me leave to hope that at another time you would communicate your thoughts

po'ts on the subject of man's natural enmity
against God. If the present is agreeable to you,
will now expect that favor.

CLERG. I am at your service, sir.

GENT. Dr. Whitaker says, as I observed
yesterday, that "the quarrel is against God as
oathed with his true character; that the
whole character of God, every tittle of it, is the
object of the sinner's hatred; that this enmity
is innate and interwoven with the very frame
of the heart; and that the more God's charac-
ter is known, the more it will be hated by all
natural men."——I think, sir, you don't ap-
prove of this doctrine.

CLERG. It appears to me that the Dr's
po'ts on this subject are indigested, superficial,
and not exactly just. Perhaps you will think
me more so: however, I will let you know
them. Suffer me to make several observati-
ons; as,

First, That the general passions of love and
hatred are indeed "innate, and interwoven
with the very frame of our hearts," and con-
stitute part of their natural character——That
God is the natural and right object of the passi-
on of love, and *evil* of hatred.——Good may
be distinguished into two general kinds, natu-
ral and moral; so may evil. A spirit of equity
and benignity is morally good: Unrighteous-
ness,

ness, partiality, fraud, malignity, and cruelty are morally evil.

Observe also, There is in man a natural faculty whereby he is rendered capable of discerning and distinguishing between moral good and evil, as well as natural, and readily perceives the one to be right, amiable, and worthy of esteem and honor, the other wrong, hateful and blame-worthy, immediately, as soon as these objects are seen by the mind in their true light, or as being what they really are, without any further reasoning about them. This faculty is "innate," an essential part of the natural constitution of all intelligent and moral beings, *as such*; and is found in experience actually existing both in righteous and wicked men. On this is founded the principle and power of natural conscience. Beasts want this faculty of moral discernment, and therefore are naturally incapable of moral government: take it out of our nature, or suppose it destroyed or inverted in man, and he is as unfit a subject for such a government as they.

From hence it necessarily follows, that actions and characters which are morally good when viewed by the mind in their *true light* or as being what they really are, can't but appear good, amiable, and worthy of esteem and honor, considered absolutely in themselves.

and they are in fact so regarded by all men, in his view of them, and cannot be hated for their own sakes ; and, on the contrary, actions and characters morally evil, viewed as above, appear to the mind evil, are disapproved as objects of moral hatred. To suppose the contrary is inconsistent with the existence and exercise of the above-mentioned faculty of discerning and distinguishing between moral good and evil ; or otherwise, is to suppose the same object, in the same view of it, to appear both good and evil, at the same time, and for the same reason ; which is absurd and impossible. We do in fact see things in real life, as this reasoning shews them to be. Nothing is more common than to hear vicious men condemn the vices in others, which they allow in themselves, when circumstances are so varied that they don't see themselves in them ; and on the other hand, approve and commend those virtues in others which they refuse to practise : and what is more, in their calm and serious intervals, they do, and can't but secretly disapprove their own evil conduct and blame themselves for it, (and would cease from it too if particular lusts did not draw them on) according to that ancient acknowledgement of the heathen philosopher, *"I see and approve those things which are good, but practise those that are evil."*

evil." Which is a demonstration that virtue is not hated as virtue, nor vice loved as vice. Vicious men do indeed too often call evil good, and good evil; but this is always effected by misrepresenting them to themselves, and cloathing them with unnatural circumstances, whereby they make them appear to their minds with a different face from the true.

GENT. What you say, sir, seems to carry a great strength of evidence with it; but will it not hence follow, that carnal men have and can have no enmity to God, contrary to what you acknowledged yesterday?

CLERG. No, sir: Please to have a little patience, and keep up a calm, unjealous attention; I trust things will come out right presently, to the honor of God, advantage of religion, and your own satisfaction. Suffer me to observe further,

Actions, and agents or characters morally good, may be considered in a twofold view; either first, simply, or absolutely as they are in themselves: in which view of them, I have said, and I believe proved, that they can't be hated, can't but be approved as right and good by the mind of man, and by all moral beings:—Or secondly, they may be considered relatively, or as they respect us. In this relative view of them, they may possibly be hated, and

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in fact they too often are, because they militate against some particular lust of our's, or are inconsistent with some private interest we have much at heart. Thus a man who is guilty of treason, seeing the equity of the judge's sentence against another person, as a cruel murderer, who he has no interest in, will very readily approve the judgment, because he sees the righteousness and equity of it ; but let him be arraigned, and upon a fair trial, condemned for his treason, and his heart may very possibly live in enmity against his judge, against the law, and against the king ; and perhaps he will push his enmity so far, if he can, as to dethrone his rightful sovereign. But what is his enmity levelled against ? Is it against the condemning sentence simply *as righteous* ? Not at all : It is against it only as militating against his life. His love to his life is stronger than his regard to righteousness, and suppresses the acting of that. However, we often see the sense of righteousness so strong, even in unsanctified minds, under condemnation for their crimes, as to prevent the risings of this unjust enmity, and bring them to yield themselves to the hands of justice. And all convinced sinners are bro't to ascribe righteousness to the great God, and submit at his foot, before they receive his renewing and pardoning mercy ;

mercy ; (and this Dr. Whitaker owns, and even carries the matter too far) which they never could be bro't to till they are new made, if the enmity was against righteousness for it's own sake, or as righteous, and innate, and a part of the present frame of the human heart, as he represents the matter : and so he sometimes says.*

Observe further, The character of the blessed God is the first, the highest, the most excellent of all moral characters. All moral perfections are united in him, and in the highest possible degree ; and the natural perfections as united with, and exerted for the purpose of displaying and exercising the moral, are, in this view of them, amiable as well as awful. God is therefore in himself absolutely and infinitely

* He says, p. 15. " I firmly believe that no man ever was or will be reconciled to God, till he is brought to approve and willingly submit to that righteousness of God which is revealed from heaven against all unrighteousness and ungodliness of men, and according to which he will render indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish upon every soul of man that doeth evil : Which implies more in it than a bare owning that God is righteous, and will take vengeance on the wicked ;— It implies an approbation of, and love to it, so as to delight in God on this account, as well as for his infinite grace, love and mercy to those that are saved."

The good gentleman is here got over into the contrary extreme to that which generally prevails in these discourses.——He has said, p. 12. " It is impossible for such a depraved soul," (the carnal, unconverted) " while under the power of corruption, to submit to the punishment of his crimes, as heartily to approve the law, and the judge that condemns him."

finitely amiable. He can't then be the object of hatred to any moral being, considered simply in himself; or in other words, his character can't be hated for its own sake, or as appearing to the mind wrong and worthy of disapprobation in its own nature. If any do hate it, as wicked men in some sense do, it is only as relatively considered, and from interested views.

GENT. It may be as you say, for ought that I know to the contrary; but Dr. Whitaker says, p. 13. "Is it not very absurd to suppose that our native enmity to God arises *only* from the apprehension of his anger against us? If this were true, it would follow that men would have no enmity against God or his law, till they come to believe he is angry with them. But is there not a manifest contrariety to God in the hearts of men, apart from all considerations of him as an *avenger*."

CLERG. Doubtless there is such a prevailing contrariety to God and his laws in the hearts of men, so far as lusts of sin rule in them. But then, in this they are contrary to *themselves*, as well as to God. If they have light in their understanding, they disapprove what they allow in practice, and approve the law as just and good, at the same time that, for their lusts sake, they bear partial enmity to it, as contra-

ry to them. And if they thus hate the law, they at the same time blame and condemn themselves as acting *wrong* in acting contrary to it; which is a justification of God and his law, and a demonstration that this enmity to God is an *interested* and *unnatural* passion, and does violence to the moral sense planted in the mind by the hand of the Creator: and herein lies the great malignity of wilful sin.

From what has been observed on this subject, it follows, that it is not enough to engage a sinner to love God with a supreme practical regard, to shew him the character of God, as amiable in itself; he must also be shewn how it is consistent with his happiness, and has a benign aspect upon him, and how his life and happiness are connected with his duty to God. 'Tis the great design of the gospel to do both these. And when the holy Spirit gives this double view to the mind of a poor sinner, by the word of the gospel, and strongly impresses this sense upon the heart, there needs no more: his enmity dies, slain by the moral power of this glorious light of the truth and love of God; his heart is reconciled, and flows out in admiring love and praise, and dissolves in genuine repentance: he is a new creature, in the moral sense. This agrees both with the doctrine and experience of the holy apostles. Paul
says,

says, *We all with open (unveiled) face, beholding, as in a glass, the glory of the Lord, are changed into the self same image. And again, God hath shined in our hearts to give the light of the knowlege of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. And John says, We love God, because he first loved us.*

GENT. Dr. Whitaker, mentioning these words of John, says to this purpose, "God's love to us is not the moral cause of our love to him, but the efficient cause of it." p. 41.

CLERG. I suppose he goes into this forced and unjust interpretation of the text, from hard necessity : for in the obvious sense of the apostle's words, they oppose and overthrow his new scheme of doctrine. But I think it is much safer, much better, and more honorable for men to remove their own wrong notions out of the way of the holy apostle's, than to compel them to give the way to their upstart errors. But I return to the subject.

Another consequence is, that the enmity of man's heart against God is not, properly speaking, one of the "innate," or natural passions, "interwoven with the frame of our hearts," as Dr. Whitaker says it is ; or in other words, it is not one of the *primary* passions of human nature in the present state of it, but is a *secondary* passion only, a consequence and result of particular

ticular wrong affections, indulged in opposition to the law and will of God. Any particular sinful affection, whether of the sensual, covetous, or ambitious kind, (of which we have the seeds of more than enough in us ever since the fall) thus indulged, is practical opposition, or enmity, if you please, to the law of God. And these persisted in against light, will draw after them a higher and more malignant kind of enmity against God, as standing in the way of such indulged lusts. And in this case, if the sense of God's righteousness in opposing and condemning the sinner in his evil way is weak, (as it too commonly is) and the sense of his own faultiness low and dull, this enmity may flame out dreadfully, and work up to blasphemy and cursing. This is the present state of devils, and in a sad degree the case of some men. But it is a great mistake to suppose and teach that things will remain in this horrid confusion in wicked minds forever, as too many do.—When God comes near to judgment he will reveal his righteousness from heaven, and impress upon all wicked souls, both of men and devils, such a clear, convincing, strong sense of the equity and fairness, and *real kindness* of his dispensations towards them in their former state of trial, of the heinousness of their offences, and of the justice and moral necessity of his

his present sentence of condemnation, (which impression will never be suffered to wear off any more) as will so far overballance their natural self-love, as to oblige them to justify God's character, conduct, and judgment, in word and mind; and forever silence all murmurings, injurious reflections, and hard speeches against him, and all blasphemy and cursings of their Maker: Their rage will then turn inward against themselves, as the flame of a reverberating furnace falls with all its force upon the melting metal. This is the view which he who knew gives us of the final condition of lost souls: *There shall be weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth*, he tells us; but not a word of blasphemous rage against God. No; Hell will at last, in this respect, be as silent as the grave.

I observed above, that the enmity of sinful souls against God's true character is directed against it only as relatively considered, and is a secondary passion, which arises in the heart in consequence of men's indulgence of particular lusts, which first lead them into a practical opposition to the law and righteous will of God. When the light of truth manifests their deeds to be evil and reproves them, and kindly calls them back into the right way, if they submit to the reproof, and obey the merciful call, their opposition

opposition to God ceases, no higher enmity can rise in their hearts ; their enmity is turned against their *own* lusts : But if they refuse to receive reproof, and persist in their sins against light, the light becomes offensive, and they hate it, as reproving them : *The scorner hateth him that reproveth him.* But still, even in spite of themselves, they do, and can't but secretly approve God's character as right and good, whenever they are brought to view it in it's true light ; such is the natural and unchangable frame or constitution of their souls, as intelligent and moral beings. God has placed in every man's breast, and will forever maintain there, a true witness for himself, and against their own wickedness ; which will speak, and can't but be regarded as "reproving with equity," whenever the light of God breaks in upon the mind.* The

* A certain gentleman hearing this dialogue read, objected to me that I misrepresented the sentiments of those gentlemen who think with Dr. Whitaker ; that he never knew any among them who do not acknowledge a moral constitution of nature, the natural powers of reason and conscience. Perhaps some others in reading, may make the same reflection. For their sakes, I here give the answer I gave him. "It is true they do acknowledge such faculties in human nature ; I have not said they do not : But they are inconsistent with themselves, and give such a description of the natural enmity of the heart to God's whole character, and all moral excellence, as, if true, necessarily implies the destruction of natural conscience." Natural conscience necessarily implies a faculty by which we discern the difference between moral good or excellence, and its contrary, and that the mind

The Pharisees, in our Saviour's time; carried their enmity against God and all that is morally good, as far as most men have done; and yet they are practical witnesses to the truth of what I have said. Our Lord represented their own wicked character to them, in his parable of the vineyard let out to husbandmen, in such a manner as to give them a clear and just view of it, and at the same time to conceal from them their concern in it; and then asked them, saying, *When therefore the lord of the vineyard cometh, what will he do to those husbandmen?* They say unto him, *he will miserably destroy those wicked men,* Mat. 21. 40, 41.— They readily saw the moral badness of their character, and *hated* and condemned it; they saw what justice required to be done in the case, and readily approved it as good and fit. The Lord then applied the parable to them; and they seeing their own face in the glass, cry out, *God forbid*; and *sought to lay hold on him,*

mind seeing this difference approves the good, as excellent, and worthy of esteem and honor, and disapproves the evil as wrong, hateful, and blame-worthy. This is absolutely inconsistent with such a kind of enmity, and total want of "taste for moral excellency, and utter abhorrence of God's whole character, interwoven with the very frame of the heart," as Dr. Whitaker and others dream of.—Gentlemen ought to attend better to their own ideas, and compare them so as to see their inconsistency, that they may clear their discourses of contradictions, and not advance principles subversive of each other.

him, and would have immediately slain and cast him out of the vineyard, but *they feared the people*. This is a full testimony, and *decisive* witness to the truth of my account of the spring and nature of the enmity of wicked hearts against God, given to us by the human heart, by human nature itself; (and innumerable more might be produced.) One such witness is of more weight than ten thousand confident assertions of speculative men, in contradiction thereto.

This doctrine concerning the enmity of carnal men against God, is further confirmed by this observation, which holds universally true in fact, viz. Men who hate God, his ways, and righteous servants, always misrepresent their characters to themselves, paint them in false and odious colours, and place them in such a wrong view as to make them appear either contemptible, or morally evil: This is the method they always take to justify to *themselves*, as well as to others, their enmity to them; which they would not do if moral rectitude, wisdom, righteousness and goodness, were, in themselves, objects of their natural hatred; but their hatred would point itself directly against them, as being what they really are; as in the case of natural aversions to some particular kinds of food. This hatred of wicked men
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Jesus Christ, who knows all the secret springs of human passions and actions, points out to us the true root and spring of this wicked enmity, in such a clear manner as, I think, ought to be decisive, when he says, speaking of the wicked who shall be condemned, *Men loved darkness rather than light*; (whence this absurd and monstrous preference of darkness to light?) *because their deeds are evil*. Particular wrong affections and sinful passions, first draw men away to do evil, (these passions, in human nature, in its present state, will act wrong and be springs of evil works, till the truth and grace of God rectify their disorders, and take them under their lead) and then for their lusts sake, and with a view to justify and quiet themselves in their evil ways, they *love darkness rather than light*. For every one that doeth evil (with habitual wilfulness) *hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved*, or discovered to himself to be what they really are, in their nature and tendency. For then he must be strongly self-condemned, and filled with fear; which wicked men will avoid as long as they can. They therefore hate the light, just as every judge, who has taken a bribe,

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hateth the light of righteousness, and him that discovers and reproveth him for his bribery and corruption. Ahab expressed the very soul of this wicked, interested enmity when he said to the King of Judah, speaking of Michajah, *I hate him, for he doth not prophesy good concerning me, but evil.* Had we Michajah's character, as drawn by Ahab, doubtless it would be a very bad one. The wilful misrepresentations which wicked men make to themselves of God's character and works, their evil speakings and blasphemies of him, are a full evidence that their enmity against him is interested, not such as Dr. Whitaker and some others represent it. No man ever did speak evil of God's ways, viewing them as they truly are, as equitable and good, but as placing them in a wrong light to themselves. When they are obliged to see them as they are, they are reduced to silence, can object nothing to them, but justify and approve them as right, and condemn themselves. These are not idle and arbitrary speculations, but observations grounded upon facts and experience of the workings of the human heart in real life.

Our Lord directs his disciples saying, *Let your light shine before men, that they seeing your good works, may glorify your Father who is in heaven.* Now, according to the notion under
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censure, the more clearly the light shines and is seen by men, the more furiously does their enmity flame and rage against God and those that bear his image. This is a way of glorifying God which Jesus Christ never advised his disciples to stir men up to.

GENT. The evidence is full, the opposite scale kicks the beam. All reasonable and honest men, I think, can be at no loss to determine on which side the truth lies. The notion which Dr. Whitaker and many others teach, viz. That enmity to the true character of God, for its own sake, is an innate principle, and interwoven with the very frame of the human heart, is manifestly false, and I wish it may soon perish, for it is the grand foundation of the Sandemanian scheme of doctrine, which is one of the worst schemes that was ever invented.

CLERG. You grow zealous, sir; but we ought to consider that it is extreme difficult even for honest minds, to break thro' the power of old habits of wrong thinking, and to make great allowances for their unhappy entanglements, and forbear them in love; blessing God, with all humility, that he has saved or rescued us from such dangerous snares. But your closing remark is just. The new doctrines which are propagating among us, are built entirely on this false notion of man's innate, implacable enmity

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ty against the true and whole character of God and are supported, if this is admitted : But if the true notion and scriptural account of this enmity, (which experience and observation confirm) is received, this system of errors falls at once, as a castle built in the air.

GENT. I esteem it such a castle.

CLERG. Since we are upon the melancholy subject of the enmity of poor sinners against God, I will just mention one thing more.

Many very honest and good people have often complained of the workings of a secret enmity and hard thoughts of God, and quarrellings against him ; which does not, like that we have been discoursing upon, arise out of the wickedness of the heart, but is wholly occasioned by misrepresentations of the character and ways of God to the mind, and false and wrong views of him, which have unhappily gotten possession of the mind, and are supposed, thro' ignorance and wrong instruction, to be the true and genuine views of his character and works. In the light wherein they view them, they appear morally evil, wrong, and objects of just hatred. The enmity which the mind conceives against them, viewed in this wrong light, is, in a proper sense, a natural enmity ; that is, it arises from the moral frame of the mind, and the innate sense of the hatefulness

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of actions and characters morally evil and wrong. And if the heart is gracious, this sense is greatly heightened. This kind of enmity is, in no true construction, a hatred of God's true character, which may be heartily approved and loved at the same time; but only of a really bad character, falsely ascribed to him, merely thro' ignorance, mistake and misinformation. This may be illustrated by the case of a child educated abroad, who has instilled into his mind, perhaps by the foolish tattle of his nurse or schoolmaster, very wrong and injurious notions of his father's character, and temper, and designs towards him; representing of him as very unreasonable, arbitrary and cruel, or false and hypocritical towards him; whereas, in truth, he is quite the reverse. This wrong view raises in the child disaffection, and hard and blaming tho'ts. His father, who knows the case, pities him, considering it as ignorance and error, not malice against his true father.—The true and effectual cure of this kind of enmity, is accomplished by correcting these unhappy misapprehensions, and giving the mind a just view of the true character of God, and setting his actions and dispensations in that true light wherein he himself has placed them.

GENT. If so, gentlemen of your cloth ought to take all possible care to be themselves well instructed

instructed in the character and dispensations of that great and glorious God and Saviour, who you are, by the duty of your office, to make known to others, I don't know how honest men can easily forgive you, if by your ignorant and presumptuous misrepresentations of the great Lord and Father of the universe, you minister to them the occasion of hard and injurious tho'ts of him, whom they ought to adore and bless continually, with all humility and joyfulness.

CLERG. What you now observe is worthy of our most serious consideration. But our hearers ought not to receive implicitly, with a lazy credulity, all that their teachers say, without examination, but to study the word of God with humility and prayer; where they may hear God himself teaching the good knowledge of himself. But I am very apprehensive, that after all our care and study, we *all*, both teachers and hearers, shall still need to have great allowances made by the heavenly father, for our weaknesses and misapprehensions concerning him, and his dispensations towards man, in too many instances; and be in some measure liable to the rebuke God himself gave to Job's friends, *Ye have not spoken the thing that is right concerning me.* Yet, if we have not spoken and reasoned wrong, carelessly, presumptuously,

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